

Jon Pearce MP for High Peak

Questions for Jon Pearce

- The loss of permanent homes to holiday homes and lets - achieving a balance.
- The future of Rural Transport, current services under threat
- Visitor pressures (such as parking and littering) on infrastructure and public services in and around Castleton and how to deal with these.
 - Pursuing case files opened by Robert Largan
- Local Government reorganisation – High Peak moving from Derbyshire to Greater Manchester?

The loss of permanent homes to holiday homes and lets - achieving a balance

We are seeing a gradual but persistent loss of permanent homes to holiday homes and holiday lets. As a consequence there are few families in the village with children entering the local school, and fewer residents able to contribute to the life of the village. For the community to survive we need more permanent homes, including properties available for long let. Limited new build affordable housing in numbers appropriate for the area may be a solution in the future but first of all we need to put a stop to the loss of existing homes to the visitor market. Taxing holiday lets is unlikely be a deterrent as costs will just be passed on to the customer.

What are your views on rural housing needs, what advice would you give us to ensure that Castleton retains homes for long-term residents and how can you help us?

Rural transport issues for Castleton residents

Public transport is hugely important to our residents, for some because they have no other means of transport, for others because they want to make a difference to the environment. Improvements have been made to our rail network but Castleton has no railway station, the nearest being in Hope, for the Hope Valley line to Stockport and Sheffield.

Some limited success with additional routes has been seen over the last year such as Service 62 connecting Buxton, Castleton, Edale and Chapel. However, bus services between Castleton and Sheffield which is a key destination from the Hope Valley has deteriorated enormously with frequent cancellations. Lack of reliability means that where they can, residents take to their cars, and those without this luxury suffer massive inconvenience.

What pressures can you bring to bear on those responsible such as the local authorities and bus companies to improve performance? We are mindful of public transport functions transferring to the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority by April 2026, and the transfer of all current bus contracts to this new transport passenger body. We ask you to support the maintenance and improved performance of existing services to support rural transport in the Hope Valley.

Visitor pressures (such as parking and littering) on infrastructure and public services in and around Castleton and how to deal with these.

Castleton, Edale and other parts of the High Peak are seeing unprecedented tourist pressures, parking being one of these as recently seen on the national news.

As residents of Castleton we are very aware of how the condition of the village and surroundings are suffering. We understand anyone wanting to experience the iconic landscape but over-promotion is at odds with conservation efforts and everyday life for residents and the situation is completely out of control.

Visitor pressures (such as parking and littering) on infrastructure and public services in and around Castleton and how to deal with these.

Illegal parking and obstruction of roads on Winnats Pass and Rushup Edge. These are all main roads feeding our links to Buxton and Stockport and have to stay open for emergency vehicles, commuters and everyday needs of locals.

A multi-agency meeting was held with Derbyshire Constabulary, HPBC, DCC, Castleton Parish Council and the National Trust in 2024 to address the chaotic parking around the top of Winnats and Mam Tor (also mentioned above). Problems there began following the pandemic and have become a regular occurrence. Prior to last year's elections Robert Largan was pushing to raise parking fines to the maximum level as a proper deterrent.

Are you picking up Robert's case files and what is the status of this one which could be an important factor in reducing the problem?

Visitor pressures (such as parking and littering) on infrastructure and public services in and around Castleton and how to deal with these.

Inconsiderate parking in and around the village, which occurs especially when the car parks are full. Castleton has two car parks, there is roadside parking for visitors on the west side of the village, and pop-up car parks in fields can meet demand when the ground is dry enough. However capacity is much more limited in wet conditions, which can be at any time of year.

A great density of overnight campervan parking (currently free) takes up much of the capacity for cars to the west of the village below Mam Tor and has associated waste, obstruction and other nuisance problems.

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The 60-day permitted development campsite ruling for campervans and motorhomes introduced by the last government opened up a loophole that avoids any planning controls including safe access to the highway and visual impact. We have three of these already in Castleton and monitoring of adherence to the few conditions is almost entirely left to residents.

In February 2023 the announcement of proposals to close its four Visitors Centres was met with an outcry and the plans were delayed by the intervention of a mystery donor. The PDNPA has just announced further restructuring plans, in which two Visitor Centres will remain open, but with a much reduced offer to visitors including advice from volunteers rather than experienced staff. The PDNPA have justified their decision in part due to the reduction in their Defra grant. The Castleton Visitor Centre is a key interface with the visiting public and has been strongly supported by the community.

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What are your views, do you agree that we have a problem, what can you do for us?

Local Government reorganisation – High Peak moving from Derbyshire to Greater Manchester?

Our main transport, NHS and education links are with Sheffield and Derbyshire, not with Manchester. Our residents are rightly concerned about how decisions on restructuring local government will be made and whether there will be sufficient consultation.

So far all we have seen is worrying headlines apparently reporting your own views and challenges to them, the white paper which sets the scene nationally, and a couple of superficial resident surveys from you and our ex-MP.

Local Government reorganisation – High Peak moving from Derbyshire to Greater Manchester?

Do you really believe that the whole of the High Peak, including the Hope Valley, should be absorbed into Greater Manchester, and how can you justify that opinion?

Do you recognise that the High Peak cannot be viewed as a single entity that has to be part of Greater Manchester e.g. Stockport in its entirety?

Do you agree that the High Peak is extremely diverse, partly because of its geography, in the directions that it faces – Sheffield, Derbyshire and Manchester? And recognising this, that for instance, the A57 could be viewed as a boundary of new High Peak regions, Glossop to the west and Hope Valley to the east?

Shouldn't High Peak remain as part of the East Midlands and under the EMCCA? Having only last year elected a mayor, Clare Ward for the EMCCA, surely this area has already gone some way to participate in a Devolution activity, with implications for revised service delivery including public transport?

Local Government reorganisation – High Peak moving from Derbyshire to Greater Manchester?

Will you ensure that there is a meaningful consultation with residents, with their views properly considered, and that residents have access to the information they need to make an informed judgement on what is best for them? This might include for instance existing budgets, existing failings, areas of excellence, demand for housing, NHS waiting lists, population sizes, demographics etc. How will you do this?

Will you listen to residents of the Hope Valley?

What are the time scales for such consultation?